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Scottish National Council, Y.M.C.A.

MODEL SYLLABUS SERIES NO. 3.

SEVEN STUDIES IN SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

STUDY I.

PRELIMINARY STUDY.

"Men, if they are inimical to Christianity, utterly deny the sense of Christ's doctrine; but if they are leniently inclined, then from the height of their superior wisdom they amend it, taking for granted that Christ would have said what they think He meant, had He known how to express Himself."—TOLSTOY.

The method chosen has been (*a*) to formulate certain problems or groups of problems, (*b*) to associate with these problems references from the Bible which seem to bear on the subject, and (*c*) to suggest in what way Study Circles or Fellowship Meetings might most profitably discuss the problems in the light thrown on them by the passages cited. It should be noted that we must not expect to find in the Bible a detailed solution, a patent medicine as it were, for the disorders of the community. Further, while we believe that in Christ is to be found the Hope of the world, that does not absolve us from the need of careful study of actual conditions. We need to see every problem in proper perspective, historically and statistically, how each evil came to be in the community, and to what dimensions it has grown.

There are certain objections which can be brought against the application of Christian principles to Social Problems. These deserve careful consideration before proceeding to the studies which follow. It may be stated.

(*a*) Christ's appeal was to the individual only: there is no definitely social teaching in the Gospels.

(*b*) The Social Teaching of the New Testament applies

to peasants two thousand years ago, not to Glasgow or Dundee in the twentieth century.

(*c*) Christian teaching is separate, and must be kept separate, from political controversy.

There is clearly some justification for each of these positions. It is suggested that one or more members of the Group might prepare a statement for discussion showing what is the truth underlying one of these criticisms and how far it limits the study of the problems which follow.

The question can be put in another way. Should the Churches or the Y.M.C.A. take official action in the sphere of social reform? Two extreme views are possible: (1) That Churches and the Y.M.C.A. should keep clear of such questions altogether; that they exist for the development of the personal religious life of the individual. (2) That both the Churches and the Associations are societies for the bringing in of the Kingdom of God on earth, and therefore have a definite part to play in all political and social reform. It is very important for each member of the Y.M.C.A. to consider which of these two alternatives is the one to which he himself inclines, or how he would compromise between them. Is it permitted for Churches to pronounce officially on certain questions (*e.g.* Temperance, The League of Nations, War) but not on others (*e.g.* Nationalisation, Housing), or is it only to lay down general principles and leave the application to the individual?

Consider the part the Church has played in the history of social reform as it is described in Hammond, "The Town Labourer," any Life of Lord Shaftesbury, etc. For the whole subject consult the "Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Christianity and Industrial Problems," S.P.C.K.

Consider the following "Social Creed of the Churches" adopted by the Fortieth International Convention of the Y.M.C.A. of North America, assembled at Detroit, 1919:—

1. Equal rights and justice for all men and in all stations of life.
2. Protection of the family by the single standard of

purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, proper housing.

3. The fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of education and recreation.
4. Abolition of child labour.
5. Such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.
6. Abatement and prevention of poverty.
7. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of the liquor traffic.
8. Conservation of health.
9. Protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases and mortality.
10. The right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind, for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced employment.
11. The right of employees and employers alike to organise, and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.
12. Suitable provision for the old age of the workers, and for those incapacitated by injury.
13. Release from employment one day in seven.
14. Gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labour to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.
15. A living wage as the minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.
16. A new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the

product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

Compare with it the "Foundations of a True Social Order" passed by the 1918 London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends:

1. The Fatherhood of God, as revealed by Jesus Christ, should lead us towards a Brotherhood which knows no restriction of race, sex or social class.
2. This Brotherhood should express itself in a social order which is directed, beyond all material ends, to the growth of personality truly related to God and man.
3. The opportunity of full development—physical, moral and spiritual—should be assured to every member of the community—man, woman and child. The development of man's full personality should not be hampered by unjust conditions nor crushed by economic pressure.
4. We should seek for a way of living that will free us from the bondage of material things and mere conventions, that will raise no barrier between man and man, and will put no excessive burden of labour upon any by reason of our superfluous demands.
5. The spiritual force of righteousness, loving-kindness and trust is mighty because of the appeal it makes to the best in every man, and when applied to industrial relations achieves great things.
6. Our rejection of the methods of outward domination and of the appeal to force applies not only to international affairs, but to the whole problem of industrial control. Not through antagonism but through co-operation and good-will can the best be attained for each and all.
7. Mutual service should be the principle upon which

life is organised. Service, not private gain, should be the motive of all work.

8. The ownership of material things, such as land and capital, should be so regulated as best to minister to the need and development of man.

Is there any good end served by declarations of this kind by such bodies, and what criticisms have you to make of these particular sets of Propositions?

STUDY II.

WORK AND WAGES.

"It is necessary that the bulk of the people should be very poor in order to render them laborious, and that the lower ranks should have little prosperity in order to excite their industry."—BUXTON, in House of Commons, 1800.

Consider Rowntree's distinction between "Primary" and "Secondary" Poverty ("Poverty," B. Seebohm Rowntree. Nelson's, 2s.). "A family is said to be in 'primary poverty' when the total earnings are insufficient 'to obtain' the minimum necessaries for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency." A family is said to be in "secondary poverty" when "the total earnings would be sufficient for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency were it not that some portion of it is absorbed by other expenditure either useful or wasteful" (Mess, "The Facts of Poverty," S.C.M., 2s.). Rowntree's book should be consulted to see how carefully his estimate was made and how low his "mere physical efficiency" line is drawn. Rowntree's minimum for a family of man, wife, and three children in York in 1899 was about 27s. It would now be more than twice that sum owing to the rise in prices. Rowntree found that 10 per cent. of the people of York were in "primary poverty" and 18 per cent. in "secondary poverty," and a roughly similar result was reached for London by Charles Booth, and for Reading, Stanley, Northampton and Warrington by Prof. Bowley

("Livelihood and Poverty," by A. L. Bowley and A. R. Burnett-Hurst). If possible the Circle should (*a*) try to build up a week's budget of a family at present prices in their own town so as to arrive at their own Rowntree minimum. Information should be sought from experienced housewives if the members are not versed in the family marketing. Notice that poor people are at a disadvantage in marketing. (*b*) Try to discover what proportion of their own community is living at or near the Rowntree poverty line. For example, compare it with local rates of pay, especially in the less well organised industries; compare it with the rates published in connection with the recent railway strike. Some member of the group might get access to Chiozza Money's "Riches and Poverty" or some of J. A. Hobson's books and make a report on the suggestion that the rich as a class are always growing richer and the poor as a class, if not getting poorer, are at least failing to get their share of the enormous increase of wealth brought about by the development of modern machinery. Notice, however, that this does not mean that certain manual workers—*e.g.* miners, boilermakers—are not earning more than certain brain workers, *e.g.* ministers or Y.M.C.A. secretaries. Consider the various agencies for mitigating the effects of poverty. *Trade Boards.*—What proportion of the community are helped by them? Should the principle of Trade Boards be applied to all Trades? (*cf.* Snowden, "The Living Wage"). *Unemployment Insurance.*—Is it the case that this scheme does nothing to *prevent* unemployment? How could unemployment be prevented? (*cf.* Pigou, "Unemployment," in Home University Library). *Trades Unions.*—Is it true that Trades Unions can do little to help those workpeople who most need help? *Education.*—Would it be possible for a country to educate *all* its children so that they could earn a skilled workman's wage? (*cf.* Ruskin, "Unto this Last"). Study the State Bonus System, outlined by Dennis Milner in "The Next Step" (Headley Bros., 1s.). This proposal is that the State should

receive one-fifth of every income, and return to every member of the State an equal share of the total amount so received. Before the war this would have meant a grant of 5s. a week to every man or woman and 2s. 9d. a week for every child. If it would work, this scheme would practically abolish "Primary Poverty." A member might read Morris' "News from Nowhere," or Tolstoy's story, "Ivan the Fool," and report what light they throw on the problem.

But can we be satisfied merely to secure that all members of the community are raised above physical want? Consider the following: "The fullest opportunity of development—physical, moral, and spiritual—should be assured to every member of the community—man, woman and child. The development of men's full personality should not be hampered by unjust conditions nor crushed by economic pressure" ("The Next Step," p. 100). If we are to accept this ideal, we will need, in addition to a "Rowntree Minimum Wage," a "Christian Minimum Wage" which will allow in addition for moral and spiritual development. The Group should consider carefully how much additional expenditure would be involved and for what things. It would involve, *e.g.*, a higher standard of housing, more leisure time and better opportunities for the use of it, freedom from anxiety about sickness, old age and unemployment, more education and of a different kind, etc. Consider the report of the recent court of inquiry into the Dockers' Standard of Life, from which the following is a quotation: "The true and substantial case presented by the dockers was based on a broad appeal for a better standard of living. What is a better standard of living? By this is not meant a right to have merely a subsistence allowance, in the sense of keeping the soul and body of the worker together, but a right to have life ordered upon a higher standard, with full regard to those comforts and decencies which are promotive of better habits, which give a chance for the development of a greater sense of self-respect, and which betoken a higher

regard for the place occupied by these workers in the scheme of citizenship. The court did not discourage this view; on the contrary it approved of it. In the opinion of the court the time has gone past for assessing the value of human labour at the poverty line."

What principles should regulate wages? If it is by needs, a married man with a family should for the same work get more than a bachelor. If it is to be fixed by the value of the product, how is this to be determined? If it is fixed by bargaining, the isolated worker will be beaten down. Would it avoid the difficulty if there was a minimum fixed by law?

In the Bible we find various lines of suggestion bearing upon this problem:

(*a*) The Law assumed that there was a danger of the rich oppressing the poor, and laid down careful regulations to prevent this. *Cf.* Neh. v.; Ex. xxii. 25-27, xxiii. 6-9; Lev. xxv. 35-14; Deut. xv., xvi., xxiv.

(*b*) The Prophets, also St James, denounced profiteers and rich oppressors, especially land-grabbers. *Cf.* Amos v., viii.; Mic. vi.; Isa. iii. 14, lviii., lix.; James v. 1-6; Ps. lxxii.

(*c*) Christ laid down that "riches" endangered the spiritual life of a man, which is the most important thing in life. *Cf.* Luke xii. 13-34; Matt. vi. 19-34; Matt. xix. 16-30.

(*d*) The early Christians laid down a law of Brotherhood within the Church which while not explicitly condemning the flaws of the industrial system practically abolished them. *Cf.* Philemon; 1 Cor. xii.-xiii.; Acts iv. 32-37; 1 John iii. 13-18.

It is for the Group to discuss how far this Brotherhood is meant to apply as between every member of a community only nominally Christian, and how far "riches" and

"poverty" mean the same as they did in Christ's day (*cf.* Alice Meynell, "Poverty," in "Poems of To-day"), and discuss the following: "The poorest may be a saint. It is indeed true that there is a degrading poverty which hinders the knowledge of religious truth and the attainment of virtue. This is the poverty which is neither holy nor blessed, the poverty which is directly caused by sin (I mean by the sin of society, and especially of the plutocrats who organise society), and which God hates. The poverty of the east end slum is not the poverty of Nazareth nor of the saints, but an abomination to be abhorred, and, to the measure of their opportunities, eradicted by all good men. That moral and spiritual goods are not as much in the reach of the labourer as of the prince is due in so far as it is the case to a social disease arising directly from the sinful materialism of a godless civilisation" (E. J. Watkin, "The Philosophy of Mysticism").

STUDY III.

BREAD AND ROSES.

MARCHING SONG OF THE CHICAGO WOMEN'S UNION.

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts grey
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."

As we come marching, marching, we battle, too, for men—
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes—
Hearts starve as well as bodies: Give us Bread, but give us Roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient song of Bread;
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew—
Yes, it is bread we fight for—but we fight for Roses too.

As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater Days—
The rising of the women means the rising of the race—
No more the drudge and idler—ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses!

JAMES OPPENHEIM.

The previous Study was mainly concerned with the idea that there is a minimum standard below which no member of the community should be allowed to sink. We now have to consider the positive question, What is the "Good Life" which we are to desire for every member of the community? Here, then, is the question for each member of a study group: What are the conditions of a truly happy life, and how far are they possible for every member of a community? How far is money essential? Quite clearly up to the level of the "Christian minimum" outlined in last Study it is essential. Aristotle, the shrewdest of men, says the Good Life is "not without sufficient money," and is it not fair to say that whatever our professions, that is the assumption on which the working life of our nation is lived? Does not this mean confining the Good Life to the few? How far is abundant leisure essential? Compare Ecclesiastius, ch. xxxviii. How far is reputation essential? Clearly everybody cannot be famous. Compare the song in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Gondoliers" about the king who promoted everybody to the top of every tree:

> "Lord Chancellors were cheap as sprats,
> And bishops in their shovel hats
> Were plentiful as tabby cats,
> If possible too many." And so on.

With the result that "when everybody's somebodee, then no one's anybody." How far is the Good Life a matter of intellectual endowment? Plato taught (in the Republic) that the people in a community were either golden, silver, or iron, and that a State would flourish only if it carefully sought for its golden members and set them to live the life they were fitted for and confined the others to an inferior

life. A somewhat similar distinction was commonly made in this country, at any rate until quite recently. Compare Disraeli's story, "Sybil, or The Two Nations." Consider this announcement by an English clergyman about a hundred years ago: "The poor multiply rapidly in order that there may always be some to fulfil the most servile, the most sordid, the most ignoble offices of the community. The stock of human happiness is thereby much increased; whilst the more delicate are not only relieved from drudgery, but are left without interruption to pursue those callings which are suited to their various dispositions." The essential contrast is not abolished by establishing what is called a "*Ladder* of educational opportunity" by which a few bright specimens pass from the one "nation" to the other (*cf.* Cole, "Labour in the Commonwealth"). That is why the W.E.A. objects to the metaphor of the Ladder and substitutes the conception of a Highway of Education on which everyone can walk. Consider Christ's teaching in this matter, *e.g.* The Sermon on the Mount; and Paul's teaching, *e.g.*, in 1 Cor. i. Does not this mean that the Good Life (the "Kingdom of God" or "Life in Christ") is open to all sorts of people, and that as a matter of fact poor and hard-working and disreputable persons have rather a better chance than richer and more famous people? Would it be true to say that the difference between the Christian ideal and the others is that the former stands for service and the latter for self-development? Does not the ideal of self-development preclude a state of affairs in which all can share the Good Life? If we accept the suggestion that the essential thing about the Good Life is the religious factor, why should we strive to secure shorter hours of labour and more opportunities for culture? What answer is there to the criticism that if the "lower classes" are given better houses they will, *e.g.*, use the baths to keep coal in and spend their extra time and money on gambling? Consider, on the other hand, the evidence supplied by the Festival Movement that musical gifts are far more wide-

spread than is generally thought. Is it any better to live in a beautiful town rather than in an ugly one, or for children to be educated in a beautiful school rather than an ugly one? What practical suggestions has the Group to make for beautifying either the schools or other buildings of their community?

STUDY IV.

THE INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM.

"13122. Present grievances are not merely material grievances?—No. I should say that though material grievances are not becoming less, the element represented by material grievances is becoming proportionately less all the time.

13123. And their present demands are not merely for greater opportunity or more money, but for a change of status? I think the fundamental unrest which has spread through industry does not rest on these factors alone, but rests on the worker feeling that his position under the capitalist system is an unjust position.

13124. In fact the worker's demand is a moral demand?—Yes.

13125. Might I say they are finding their own souls?—Gradually.

13126. And in the present commercial system that is extremely inconvenient?—Yes, for the commercial system."

"The Sankey Report."

"There will be none but the Righteous, I shall know no more of sin;
There I'll see Mamma and Nellie, for I know he'll let them in;
But I'll have to tell the angel when I meet him at the door,
That he must excuse my papa, 'cause he couldn't leave the store."

P. P. Bliss. No. 415 in Sankey's Enlarged Hymnbook.

We have been discussing two ideals of the Good Life which we desire shall be within reach of every member of a Christian community: the ideal of self-development and the

ideal of service. We have now to consider how far the present Industrial System permits of the realisation of these ideals.

A little more than a hundred years ago things were fairly simple. Take the case of Silas Marner in George Eliot's story. It was easy for a man in his position to feel he was directly serving the community. The same is true of the peasants and shoemakers in Tolstoy's stories, or Tennyson's "Northern Farmer, Old Style." And it still holds more or less outside the bigger towns. In so far as such people think about these things they can feel that their service is in the same class as that of a doctor or a minister. Their conditions of work did not hinder them, if they chose, from acquiring a very considerable measure of culture and learning. Spinoza was a lens-grinder, Jacob Behmen a shoemaker, Hugh Miller a stone-mason, and so on.

Cf. "Why was I like a man sworn to a thing,
Working to have my wains in every curve,
Ay, every tenon, right and as they should be?
Not for myself, not even for these wains;
But to keep in me living at its best,
The skill which must go forward and shape the world,
Helping it on to make some masterpiece."

L. Abercrombie.

The Circle might discuss how far motor cars are or could be made in this spirit.

With the development of the industrial system conditions have changed. The factory hand may be kept at some minute process and will find it difficult to realise the service he is rendering to the community. In various ways he may feel that the collective service of his group to the community is marred and vitiated by causes over which he has no control, by adulteration or by false advertisement. The Group should discuss whether the creation and satisfaction of a new demand justifies a departure from literal truth in an advertisement, and whether it is possible to defend

adulteration by saying that people *want* inferior goods at a cheaper rate. The present form of the wages system tends to turn "Labour" into a commodity to be purchased or dispensed with without reference to anything but economic advantage. This substitutes a cash nexus for the personal bond which used to exist in industry between employer and employed. The workman feels he is not serving the community at all in the first instance, but the private profit of his employer, which may or may not coincide with public advantage. The Group should try and define carefully what they mean by "profiteering." Often an industry makes profits not by efficiently supplying a demand, but by "holding up" something that the community must have, until an exorbitant price is forthcoming. Compare stories like Wells' "Tono Bungay," Onion's "Good Boy Seldom," Arnold Bennett's "The Card," Hyne's "Thompson Progress," Barr's "Lord Stranleigh," Norris' "The Octopus" and "The Pit." Do they describe a "Christian" Industrial system?

A strong indictment has been built up against the whole structure of the Industrial System on this ground, that it prevents the attainment of both ideals and is therefore fundamentally opposed to Christ's teaching. Ruskin contrasts Christ's Beatitudes with the present-day version, which he gives as follows:

> Blessed are the rich in flesh: for theirs is the Kingdom of Earth.
>
> Blessed are they that are merry and laugh the last.
>
> Blessed are the proud: in that they have inherited the earth.
>
> Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after unrighteousness: in that they shall divide its mammon.
>
> Blessed are the merciless: for they shall obtain money.
>
> Blessed are the foul in heart: for they shall see no God.
>
> Blessed are the war-makers: for they shall be adored by the children of men.

The Group might discuss Ruskin's general attitude to

modern civilisation and consider whether he is a reliable witness against it. It is, however, important to consider what can be said on the other side. Many people, while admitting it has many ugly features, would maintain,

(*a*) that it *works*, and we cannot be sure any alternative would ;

(*b*) that it does actually produce far more wealth than any proposed alternative would ;

(*c*) that it is founded on human nature.

It is for the Group to discuss how far these contentions are true and Christian. They should be applied as tests to the ideas of Morris ("News from Nowhere") and Kropotkin ("Fields, Factories, and Workshops").

In the Bible we are mainly dealing with a simpler system, and the prophets are rather in awe of the wealth and luxury of the great Trading Cities of Tyre and Rome (*cf.* Isa. xxiii. ; Ezek. xxvi.-xxvii.; Rev. xviii.). In Ecclesiasticus xxvi., xxvii. and xlii. we have a very low estimate of the morality of commerce. There is little direct reference to the problem in the Gospels and the Epistles, but Christ's insistence on the value of human personality (*e.g.* Matt. xvi. 26) goes to the root of the matter.

STUDY V.

THE DEPENDANTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

"While it is a fact that people live in badly-drained houses, drink sewage water, and purchase bad meat and adulterated groceries, it is no use arguing that their interests would lead them not to do so. The fact demolishes any amount of presumption and argument."—JEVONS.

In a community there are bound to be many members who are not able to contribute to its wealth, and who are therefore dependent on their fellows for the means of life. They fall roughly into four classes : children, old people, sick

people and unemployed. In small non-industrial communities such as we find in Bible times the problem of these dependants is fairly simple. The collective responsibility of the Group for its weaker members is generally recognised. The standard of life may not be very high, but any departure from it is noticed at once and helped in the way that commends itself to the mind of the village. This mutual helpfulness was continually stimulated by the Prophets and Lawgivers of the Old Testament, and by the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, notably Luke x. 25. To a certain extent the universality of the teaching was modified by applying the help in the first instance to the Jewish and Christian community respectively, but the obligation was accepted. The same simplicity in the problem holds of villages, *e.g.* in Africa or even in Ian Maclaren's Drumtochty stories. In Scotland the reciprocal clan loyalty formed an additional bond between chieftain and vassals. But with the growth of the factory system the personal link between the members of the body politic is broken and the feeling of corporate unity is weakened. The population is massed together in towns—the rich at one end and the poor at the other. All observers agree in reporting that it is astonishing how poor people manage to keep up so strong a tradition of neighbourliness. But inevitably this is insufficient. A great deal of want and suffering can go on without coming to the notice of the common mind, which is apt to be reached only by glaring examples.

There are three ways in which the dependent section of the population may be provided for: individual responsibility; individual charity; and community action.

1. **Individual Responsibility.** Some philosophers used to assume, *e.g.*, that parents would do the best for their children under all circumstances, and that everyone *ought* to have enough for his own sickness and old age. But it was found that that simply is not true. Great numbers of people either cannot or will not save enough for such needs.

It is for the Group to discuss whether it is reasonable to expect a man living below the standard of "the Christian minimum" as already outlined to save at all. Further, what is the Christian thing to do to a man who has not saved and yet falls ill or becomes unemployed?

2. Individual Charity. As a state of mind charity is a most desirable virtue. But as a factor in the actual life of a modern town it is open to criticism. (*a*) *Insufficiency.*—It is extremely unlikely to reach all the needy cases; (*b*) *Unevenness.*—The charity depends on the tastes and caprices of the individual donor, who may not be the best judge, and whose motives may be not wholly unselfish; and (*c*) *Pauperisation and Imposture.*—Charity, especially modern charity, lends itself to the creation of an unsatisfactory state of mind in its recipients. Even when charity is organised these evils are only modified, and in addition the relief becomes even more impersonal and as such loses much of its value. The Group should also consider how far it would be possible and desirable for groups within the community (*e.g.* Churches) to be responsible for their own poor only. How far could this be justified by the example of the Apostolic Church? What drawbacks would there be?

3. Community Action. This has two enormous advantages: there need be no lack of money and it can make sure of reaching all the cases. But it has so far been open to three serious objections: (*a*) It tends to be too impersonal; this is perhaps not necessary, but it was universally true in the early days of relief (*cf.* Oliver Twist) and is largely true now. (*b*) It is not applied systematically. For example, infectious diseases are more completely controlled than others. (The Group should consider the reasons for this.) (*c*) The aim has been negative rather than positive, *i.e.* an ambulance at the foot of the cliff rather than a fence at the top. It is for the Circle to discuss and inquire how far the dependants in their own community are being relieved in accordance with each of these

principles and how far a scheme of provision can be worked out which will have the advantages of all three.

The Children. The Reports of the Medical Officer of Health and the Educational Authority's Medical Officer should be studied. Compare the rate of Infant Mortality either between the different wards of your town or between your town and others. Consider the work children are allowed to do in your community and the facilities for their play (*cf.* Zech. viii. 5). Study the history of Factory Legislation as applied to children. Study books like "Citizens in Training," Alden; "Child Life and Labour," Paton; "The Children of the Nation." On what principles is Education provided for the children of your area? Is it a fair criticism that the Board Schools only give what has been called a Wage-Slave's Education? Is it held that it is a loss to the whole community if an average lad fails to learn a skilled trade or a brilliant pupil fails to reach the university, or is it regarded as merely a misfortune for the individual?

Old Age. The principle of Pensions is now accepted. The main problems that arise are, What should be the relation of the pension to the savings, if any, of the pensioner, and should the provision be generous or economical? Which is the more "Christian" view in each case?

Health. The Group should study carefully the complex health machinery of a modern town. It is not much good discussing it without such study. *Cf.* Sir George Newman's "The Health of the State."

Unemployment. It is inevitable with industry as at present constituted that there should be periodic unemployment. The nature of the problem makes it inevitable that only the State can deal with it adequately. Consider the present State provision. Two criticisms are made of it: (*a*) That it does nothing to *prevent* unemployment; (*b*) that it does not provide sufficient relief to prevent man deteriorating under a misfortune for which he is in no way to blame. Compare the proposals made by the Building Trades Parlia-

ment, which include a guarantee within certain limits of *full* pay during unemployment.

STUDY VI.

THE ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY.

"I have been nineteen years in the galleys. At the inn they say 'Get out!' I am hungry. Can I stay?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "place another plate on the table."

"Stop!" said Valjean. "Not that! Did you not understand me? I am a galley slave. Can you give me something to eat and a place to sleep? Have you a stable?"

"Madame Magloire," said the Bishop, "put some sheets on the bed in the alcove."

"Monsieur le Curé," said the amazed convict, "you are good. You don't despise me. And I have not hid from you where I came from."

The Bishop touched his hand gently and said, "What need have I to know your name? Before you told me I knew it."

"You knew my name."

"Yes," answered the Bishop, "you are called my brother."

VICTOR HUGO, "Les Miserables."

It is possible to imagine the community as divided into three groups: the social, the indifferent, the anti-social. The "social" section would include all who are definitely striving to make the world better. The anti-social group would include all who consciously act in a way that harms their fellows. And the indifferent is the mass of ordinary people. It is for the Group to estimate the relative sizes of these three sections in their own community. The anti-social group falls into two classes: those who actually break the law of the land and those who offend against moral laws which for one reason or another have not been included in the body of the civil law (*e.g.* profiteers). It is

important to remember that both public opinion and the law vary from time to time and from place to place; and moral disapproval varies from one section of the public to another. *Cf.* Miss Loane's criticism: "Among the poor generosity ranks far before justice, sympathy before truth, love before charity, a pliant and obliging disposition before a rigidly honest one. In brief, the less admixture of intellect required for the practice of any virtue, the higher it ranks in popular estimation." Is this true? It has been pointed out that at least till recent times the aim of the law of our country had a strong bias towards the protection of property as distinct from the development of the good life. Is this inevitable? What is to be the attitude of the community to those who break its laws? The Group should find out what the local procedure is, what classes of offences are commonest, and what penalties are imposed (*cf.* Devon, "The Criminal and the Community"). It should then proceed to consider what aim lies behind the infliction of the punishment. Is it inflicted merely as a kind of revenge (*e.g.* an eye for an eye)? Or is it inflicted to prevent the criminal repeating the offence or to frighten other people from committing it? About a hundred years ago this was the accepted theory, and various cruel penalties for slight offences were the rule. Now the severity of the penalties is much reduced and much less official publicity is given to them. People are no longer hanged in public. But it is still generally assumed that severe punishments deter criminals. Is this true? On the other hand, it is suggested that the aim of punishment should always be the reformation of the criminal, and that therefore our present system of trials and prisons, etc., is fundamentally unsound. This criticism applies particularly to juvenile criminals, and has resulted in the setting up of Children's Courts, Borstal Institutions, etc., which attempt a compromise between the old theory and the new. The Group should find out about the local Children's Court and study Clarke Hall's "The Child and the State," and discuss how far compromise is

possible or desirable. The Group should discuss whether criminals are "born" or "made," studying Russell and Rigby's "The Making of the Criminal" and Royden's "Downward Paths."

In addition to the punishment of law-breakers by the machinery of the law there are also more informal penalties which a community can inflict. Long ago the censure of the Church was a most powerful weapon which was often used cruelly and unjustly. Paul held that in his day the Church was the ultimate authority for its members, not the State. The Church has perhaps hardly the same authority now, but it is worth discussing what would be the result if the Church refused admission to communion to proved "profiteers" or to those whose income was derived directly or indirectly from "sweated labour" or slum property; or if ministers refused to marry people who could not produce a certificate of freedom from venereal disease. Another obvious illustration is the Drink Traffic.

But there is a further question involved. Read John viii. 1-11. This seems to point logically to the abolition of all legal penalties and even social censure. The Group should discuss what conclusions are to be drawn from it for modern social life (*cf.* Hugo's "Les Miserables," Tolstoy's "Resurrection," and Morris' "News from Nowhere").

STUDY VII.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMUNITY.

"I speak with a fixed conviction that human nature is a noble and beautiful thing, not a foul or a base thing. All the sin of men I esteem as their disease, not their nature; as a folly which may be prevented, not a necessity which must be accepted. And my wonder, even when things are at their worst, is always at the height which this human nature can attain. Thinking it high, I find it always a higher thing than I thought it; while those who think it low, find it, and will find it, always lower than they thought it; the fact being,

that it is infinite and capable of infinite height and infinite fall; but the nature of it—and here is the faith which I would have you hold with me—the nature of it is in the nobleness, not in the catastrophe."—RUSKIN.

"This extended recognition of the noble and lovely qualities of human life, the qualities upon which pure art must seize, is due partly to what we call democracy. But it implies something more than that word is commonly supposed to denote—a new and more deeply religious way of looking at mankind, a gradual triumph after so many centuries of the spirit which is Christ's, an enlarged faculty for piercing below externals and appearances to the truth and essence of things."—J. A. SYMONDS.

We have carefully to distinguish between Democracy as a Method and as an Ideal.

There is little reference to political democracy in the Bible. Democratic (or anti-autocratic) movements have, however, drawn inspiration quite often from the Bible, more especially from the Old Testament. The text about rendering to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and phrases in the epistles about the powers that be, have been many times put both to good and bad use in defence of the *status quo*.

The history of the struggle for democracy is most inspiring, but now that representative government is practically taken for granted, students of politics are far from clear that it is so satisfactory (*cf.* Graham Wallas' "Human Nature in Politics" and Inge's "Outspoken Essays"). This disillusionment finds expression in sayings such as "Democracy substitutes government by the incompetent many for government by the corrupt few"; "Few take trouble to persuade the people, except those who see their interest in deceiving them."

The main flaws in our democracy would seem to be:

1. **Apathy.**—The Group should compare the percentage of the electorate that vote in the elections in their communities with the estimated attendance at Picture Houses and Football Matches. Why was the turn-out to vote at the Local Option election so great?

2. Absence of Discussion. Mill said : " Liberty has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of free and equal discussion." Could we claim that our government was based on " free and equal discussion " ?

3. Party Strife. Wells has an interesting account of an election in " The New Macchiavelli," in which he notes that the electorate did not take an interest in the election until it degenerated into a kind of fight. They found principles and ideals boring and wanted scoring off opponents. Could not the same criticism be made of labour disputes ? *i.e.* that many on both sides don't want peace, but want some one to hate and fight against.

4. The Formation of Opinion. The Group should consider how the mass of electors form their opinions. How far is it a good thing that people can be swayed by posters and headlines. Notice the effect of posters on both sides in the No-Licence Campaign, and consider how far such methods of persuasion conform to what Mill calls " free and equal discussion." Consider the effect of " John Bull " posters on, *e.g.*, the International Outlook of our country. What security is there that newspapers tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ? " It is constantly said that human nature is heartless. Do not believe it. Human nature is kind and generous ; but it is narrow and blind, and can only with difficulty conceive anything but what it immediately sees and feels. People would instantly care for others as well as themselves if they could only imagine others as well as themselves. Let a child fall into the river before the roughest man's eyes ; he will usually do what he can to get it out, even at some risk to himself ; and all the town will triumph in the saving of one little life. Let the same man be shown that hundreds of children are dying of fever for want of some sanitary measure which it will cost him trouble to urge, and he will make no effort, and probably all the town would resist him if he did " (Ruskin). Consider the lack of imagination in

the constituency and the hindrances it causes to Social Betterment.

5. Personnel. The Government is carried on (*a*) by elected representatives, (*b*) by a local and national Civil Service. Does the Group think that the present Democracy tends to get the best people to occupy both these sets of offices. What security is there against demagogues in the first and bureaucrats in the second? Consider various remedies for the diseases of democracy, *e.g.* Wells' suggestion ("Mankind in the Making") that for an election there should be substituted something akin to jury procedure.

6. Democracy as an Ideal. The central idea of this is that the test of good government is its effect on the lives of ordinary working people. It lies behind Lincoln's remark that God must be fond of common people because He made so many of them. And it also inspired Paine's suggestion that the question to be asked about a section of the community if it was proposed to enfranchise them, was not "Have they a financial stake in the country?" but "Can they suffer?" This ideal is set over against the ideal that what matters is national power and prestige and display. There is plenty of testimony throughout the Bible to show on the democratic side as far as the ideal goes.

The problem for the Group to discuss is just how far this democratic ideal is generally accepted in our own community and how best it can be worked out in actual practice.

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